

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 13943

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, PINT, NI
SUBJECT: INUWA WADA FOUND GUILTY OF ELECTION IRREGULARITIES:
BARRED FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITY FOR FIVE YEARS

1. IN SOMEWHAT SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT, KANO LOCAL ELECTIONS APPEAL BOARD HAS FOUND ALHAJI INUWA WADA GUILTY OF ELECTION MALPRACTICES AND BANNED HIM FROM VOTING OR RUNNING FOR POLITICAL OFFICE FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS. AN UNCLE OF LATE HEAD OF STATE MUHAMMED AND MINISTER FOR DEFENSE IN POST-INDEPENDENCE BALEWA CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, INUWA WADA HAD ANNOUNCED HIS PLANS TO RUN FOR NATIONAL OFFICE IN 1979. LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS WERE TO SERVE AS BEGINNING OF THAT PROCESS.

2. THE ALHAJI WAS ACCUSED OF ELECTION MALPRACTICES (FAILURE TO RESIGN FROM PUBLIC SERVICE POSITION WITH LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY AND PURCHASING VOTES) BY THE MAN HE NARROWLY BEAT IN THE PRELIMINARY ROUND OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS HELD TWO WEEKS AGO. APPEAL BOARD HAS NULLIFIED ELECTION RESULTS AND CALLED SPECIAL BY-ELECTION. ONE SUSPECTS THAT ALHAJI TANKO LABARAN, A YOUNG FORMER CIVIL SERVANT, AND WADA'S OPPONENT IN FIRST ELECTION WILL BE A LEADING CANDIDATE IN THE SPECIAL ELECTION.

3. COMMENT: INUWA WADA FOLLOWED COMMON PRE-1966 ELECTION PRACTICES IN SEEKING PUBLIC OFFICE. HE USED GIFTS OF MONEY AND GRAIN TO BUY VOTES AND EMPLOYED HIS INFLUENCE TO GET WATER PIPED INTO HIS ELECTORAL DISTRICT TO ATTRACT SUPPORT. MOREOVER, AS FORMER
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POLITICANS WERE WONT TO DO, HE IGNORED REGULATIONS. IN PRESENT

CASE, THE RULES CLEARLY REQUIRE PUBLIC SERVANTS TO RESIGN THEIR APPOINTMENTS BEFORE RUNNING OFR OFFICE. THE ONE-TIME MINISTER APPARENTLY BELIEVED THAT HIS INFLUENCE AND POSITION WOULD PROTECT HIM. HE MISCALCULATED.

THE ELECTION APPEAL BOARD HAS EFFECTIVELY REMOVED HIM FROM CONSIDERATION AS A CANDIDATE FOR NATIONAL ELECTIVE OFFICE IN 1979. HOWEVER, THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION PROVIDES THAT THE CABINET OF THE FUTURE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE APPOINTED FROM OUTSIDE THE LEGISLATURE. ELECTED OFFICIALS WILL HAVE TO RESIGN THEIR POSITIONS TO TAKE UP A MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT. THEREFORE, WHILE ALHAJI INUWA WADA APPEARS OUT OF THE RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT OR PRIME MINISTER HE COULD CONCEIVABLY FIND A WAY TO HOLD NON-ELECTIVE OFFICE THREE YEARS HENCE. MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, THE RULING MAY INDICATE THAT THIS MILITARY ADMINISTRATION INTENDS THAT THE VOITNG IRREGUALRITIES

WHICH CHARACTERIZED POST-INDEPENDENCE NIGERIAN ELECTIONS WILL NOT AGAIN BECOME THE NORM. THE KANO VERDICT SHOULD SERVE AS A WARNING TO OTHER POLITICIANS, BOTH OLD-TIMERS AND NEW ASPIRANTS.

4. IT SEEMS THAT CURRENT MILITARY LEADERSHIP HAS NO INTENTION TO FOSTER RETURN OF PRE-1966 POLITICAL FIGURES TO SEAT OF POWER NOR WILL IT IGNORE ELECTION SHENANIGANS. THERE ARE OTHER APPEALS PENDING AND WE CAN EXPECT MORE FOLLOWING THE FINAL ROUND OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AT THE END OF THE MONTH. AS RULINGS IN THESE CASES ARE MADE WE WILL LEARN WHETHER KANO CASE IS FLUKE OR REPRESENTS GOVERNMENT POLICY.
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